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ABSTRACT

This issue focuses on how advancements in photography affected Iowans and the pictures they took of their communities. Five famous and not so famous photographers who have taken pictures of Iowa's history are featured: (1) John Plumbe, Jr.; (2) Isaac A. Wetherby; (3) D. C. Hale; (4) Duluth Pieper; and (5) E. M. Clark. Instructions for making picture postcards and caring for old photographs are included. A series of photographs from different periods of Iowa history poses questions to help students discover why Iowans took photographs, how they lived and dressed, what they did for fun, and what was important to them. The article suggests that photographs of modern students' lives are tomorrow's historical clues. This activity asks students to explore the photos they have at home and compare and contrast them with the pictures in the article. A series of photographs by two Iowa students record a day in the life of each of their families. An article on helping history shows students how photographs can be used to document history and reflect the changes in the appearance of towns. Several old photographs are featured in another article that helps students understand how photo-historians uncover clues by studying photographs and asking questions about what they see. Other features include a short story and a comic. (DK)

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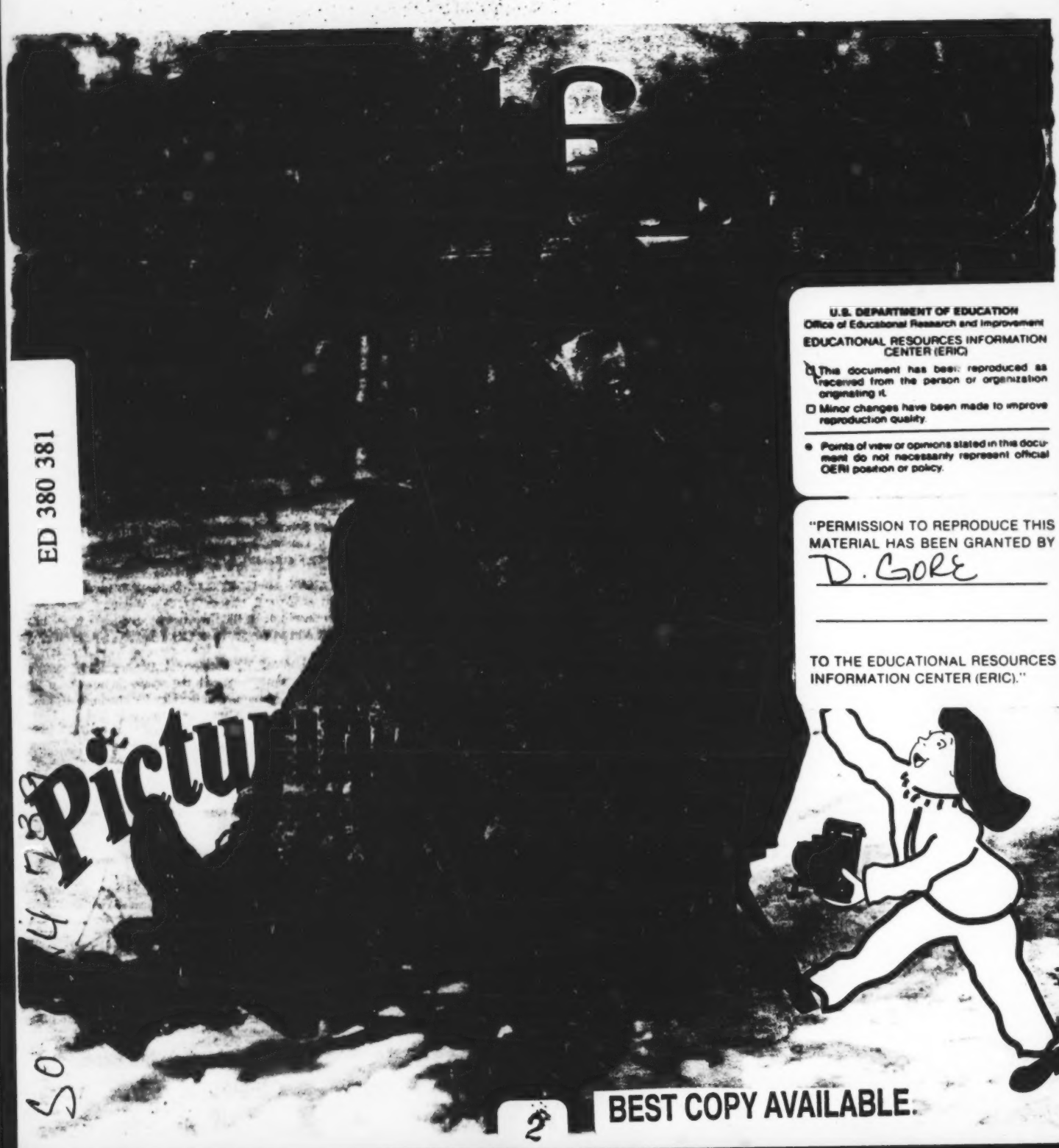

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Wild Rosie's Timeline

When your great-great-grandparents were alive photography had not been invented. But by the time your parents were born, people were taking color photographs, and your parents may have used an instant Polaroid camera to take your baby pictures! Between the lifetimes of your great-great-grandparents and your parents lies the exciting story of how photography developed and changed the lives of people across the country. Climb aboard Wild Rosie's timeline and have a look!

1839 First photographic image taken by Frenchman Louis Daguerre and called a Daguerreotype.

1869 First photograph of a total solar eclipse said to be taken in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. People came from all over the country to observe and photograph the moon crossing the sun's path, cloaking the Earth in darkness.

1898 Beginning of the "picture-postcard craze" in the United States which lasted until about 1917.

1900 Kodak's hand-held Brownie camera became the rage across the country. Cost: $1.

1942 The world's first color film made by Kodak.

1947 Instant, on-the-spot photographs made possible with Polaroid cameras.

1982 Kodak markets the Disc Camera. Film is stored on a circular disk and is easy to load and unload.

1987 One-time use, disposable cameras become popular.

1994 Iowa kids read about photography in *The Goldfinch*.

THE Goldfinch

Parents' Choice Award Winner

Volume 16, Number 2
Winter 1994

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SHSI/Joan Liffring-Zug Collection

Joan Liffring-Zug has photographed many scenes of Amish and Mennonite life in Iowa. In this photo, two Mennonite girls from Kalona update scrapbooks in the 1960s.

Joan Liffring-Zug (1929 -)

IOWA CITY — Joan Liffring-Zug is an Iowa photographer who preserves history by taking pictures of the present.

"I have never found anything more exciting to do than taking pictures," she wrote in 1981.

Liffring-Zug and the other Iowa photographers you'll meet in this issue keep Iowa's people, communities, and traditions alive with their photographs.

ON THE COVER: Iowa City photographer Fred W. Kent took many pictures of his children as they were growing up. This 1923 photo shows Kent, son Jim, daughter Barbara, and family dog Jabby sledding near their Iowa City home. Photo courtesy Barbara Kent Buckley. For more Fred Kent photos, turn to the back cover.

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What is photography?

Camera lens — Camera "eye" that focuses photos

Like the human eye, the camera lens sees images. Once the lens is focused on a person or a scene, the camera's **shutter** "blinks," letting light into the camera. The light reacts with chemicals on the film, creating an image. After the film is taken out of the camera, it is processed with chemicals and printed on paper. The end product is a photograph to put in an album or frame.

	CAMERA SIZE	LIGHT	IMAGE	COST & CHARACTERISTICS
DAGUERREOTYPE 1839	Large camera. Took studio portraits only.	Fifteen to 30 minutes of light needed to make an image. Nearby darkroom required.	Only one image on a sheet of copper.	Expensive, heavy, and fragile. Protected by glass in leather cases that opened like books.
AMBROTYPE 1852	Large camera. Took studio portraits only.	Fifteen to 30 minutes of light needed to make an image. Nearby darkroom required.	Multiple copies of one image.	More people could afford ambrotypes. Heavy and fragile. Protected in leather cases that opened like books.
TINTYPE 1854	Large studio camera not easily moved.	A few seconds of light enough to make image. Nearby darkroom required.	Multiple copies of one image on a sheet of iron.	Very cheap and less fragile. Many people could afford tintypes. Lightweight and easily mailed.
GLASS PLATE 1852	Camera could be taken outside studio.	A few seconds of light enough to make image.	Multiple prints on paper.	At first only very skilled photographers could use the equipment. Later, amateurs could take photos as a hobby.
ROLL FILM 1890 TO PRESENT	Hand-held cameras fit in pockets and purses.	A fraction of a second of light puts image on film.	Multiple prints on paper.	Affordable to many amateur and untrained photographers. Today, disposable cameras let anyone take photos.

Use this chart to track developments in photography.

But photography is more than chemicals and light. It is a visual record of people, places, and things. It's one way of saying, "Hey! This is what I'm all about."

Iowans have documented their lives through photographs for more than 100 years. Their snapshots let us experience places and times in history that we'll never visit in person.

The equipment

The equipment Iowa shutterbugs use today is much different than what they used 100 years ago.

The first cameras were big and bulky. In the early days of photography, photographers had two choices. They either took photographs in their studios and developed film in a nearby **darkroom**, or they lugged all their equipment — including a darkroom — everywhere they went. Many photographers traveled from town to town in wagons or railroad cars that doubled as studios and darkrooms. Some photographers conducted business on boats.

By 1900, some cameras had shrunk to the size

Shutter — Part of camera that lets in light

Darkroom — Place without li where film is processed

of a photographer's hand. Today, most cameras are small enough to fit in a pocket.

Film has come in many forms, too, including metal and glass, but today photographers use plastic roll film.

Photographers and photographs

The first photographic images, called daguerreotypes, (dah-GER-o-types) produced only single pictures. These photographs were copper plates treated with a chemical coating that preserved the images. Daguerreotypes were protected by heavy, fragile glass that broke and scratched easily. Shortly after daguerreotypes were invented similar photographs called ambrotypes and tintypes came along. They were less expensive, and tintypes were not as fragile and heavy.

Soon photographers colored images by hand. By the early 1850s, pictures were usually printed on paper and mounted on cardboard.

By 1852, photographers made glass plate **negatives** in order to print multiple copies of the same picture. In this way, the plate was similar to the negatives we use today. Photographers like Duluth Pieper of McGregor, Iowa, bought ready-made plates at local drugstores.

Early photographers, like this 1894 man, traveled Iowa in wagons and boats, snapping photos along the way.

Roll film, like the kind we use today, came on the photography scene in the 1890s. Photography was not just for professionals anymore. As photography equipment became less expensive and less complicated, kids and adults across Iowa and the United States documented the world around them.

In this issue

In this issue of The Goldfinch you'll learn how advancements in photography affected Iowans and the pictures they took of their communities. You'll also meet some famous and not-so-famous shutterbugs who have photographed Iowa's history.

Use the instructions on pages 16 and 17 to make picture postcards. Send them around the block, or around the world.

Be a photo historian on page 22 and learn how to care for old photos.

Learn about photography 1872-style on page 26. Kids and adults had to sit perfectly still for as long as a minute. No one could hold a smile that long, so people looked very serious in photographs.

Travel to Independence and Ottumwa with two Iowa kids who photographed a day in their lives last August 27.

Negative— The film from which photos are printed

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NEWZ

About Iowa Shutterbugs

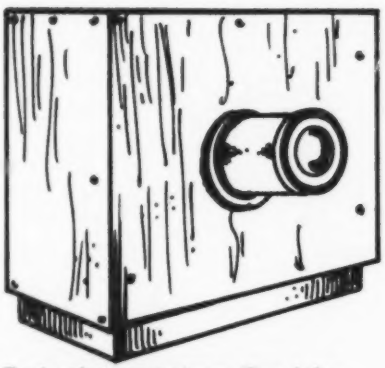
Art by Mary Muyskens

Since photography was invented in 1839, generations of Iowans have pictured Iowa's history. Unfortunately, we don't have room to tell all their stories in *The Goldfinch*. Instead, you'll meet five shutterbugs who photographed Iowa and Iowans between 1840 and the 1930s. Each photographer used the cameras, film and developing techniques that were available during their lifetimes. Read about their lives and learn how photography has changed!

John Plumbe, Jr. (1809-1857)

DUBUQUE — Born in 1809 in Wales, England, John Plumbe was 12 years old when his family moved to the United States. After working for the railroad in the early 1830s, Plumbe moved to Dubuque in 1836 where he worked as a lawyer and writer.

No one knows when Plumbe's career shifted to photography. By the early 1840s, he had opened a photograph gallery in New York. He later opened a chain of studios, including one in Dubuque.



Early photographers like John Plumbe used box cameras like the one pictured here.

Plumbe is best known for his photographs of the United States capitol building in Washington, D.C. Taken in 1846, they are the earliest surviving photos of this building.

Plumbe's photographs were called daguerreotypes (dah-GER-o-types). Daguerreotypes were pictures on pieces of copper. Plumbe would polish a copper plate until it was shiny and then covered it with chemicals. Next, he put the plate into his camera and let in light by taking the cap off the lens. It could take as long as five minutes for enough light to enter the camera and make the image appear on the copper plate.

Once the copper sheet was exposed to light, Plumbe applied more chemicals to fix the image permanently on the sheet. To protect the fragile image, photographers like Plumbe stored daguerreotypes under pieces of glass in small leather cases.

Only one image could be made from the daguerreotype, and they were very expensive. Until other advancements in photography came along, Plumbe would only photograph wealthy people who could afford to visit a photographer.

— *Millie K. Frese*

Isaac A. Wetherby (1819-1904)

IOWA CITY — Like many photographers who began their careers soon after photography was invented in 1839, Isaac Wetherby was a painter.

Born in Rhode Island in 1819, Wetherby began painting portraits when he was 15. After working as a medical illustrator and farmer, Wetherby came to Iowa City in 1854.

He opened a studio in 1862 and became the city's first professional photographer. Wetherby took pictures of people and scenes in Iowa City, including Iowa's first capitol building, known today as "Old Capitol."

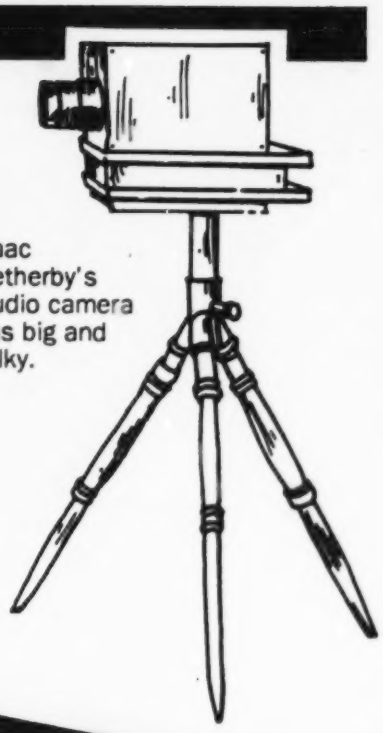
Wetherby mainly produced two kinds of photographs — ambrotypes and tintypes. Because the glass ambrotypes were fragile and heavy, they were not easily mailed to friends and relatives. But ambrotypes were popular because customers could order multiple copies of the same picture.

The U.S. Civil War (1861 to 1865) and the tintype boosted Wetherby's career. The tintype was a photograph on a thin piece of iron. It was inexpensive and light weight. Special cameras could photograph multiple copies of the same image on one piece of iron. The tintype was then cut up into smaller tintypes. Civil War soldiers visited Wetherby's studio and were photographed in their uniforms. They sent their tintypes home to friends and family.

In 1874, an illness forced Wetherby to retire and his son took over the studio. Until his death, Wetherby continued painting and wrote the story of his life.

Isaac Wetherby is perhaps best remembered for photographing Iowa's first capitol city. His photographs help Iowans remember an important part of the state's history.

— *Amy Ruth*



Isaac Wetherby's studio camera was big and bulky.

Isaac Wetherby made a tintype of this unidentified woman in his studio in the 1860s or 1870s.

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D.C. Hale
(1857-1934)

ELKADER — Dewitt Clinton (D.C.) Hale looked ahead.

As a high school student in Elkader in northeast Iowa, Hale worked for a Dubuque photographer. His experience earned him the manager's position after he graduated from high school in 1875.

In his spare time he took his equipment outside the studio and photographed his hometown.

"Someday," he told his daughter, Grace, "people will want to see them."

Hale signed, dated, and attached notes to many of his photographs.

Although he never made much money from photographing local sites, landmarks, and townspeople, Hale's photographs are valuable today. They provide a picture of life in a small Iowa town one hundred years ago.

Hale worked with the "wet plate" process of photography. For film he used glass plates that he coated with chemicals before sliding them into his camera. After he let light into the camera and took the picture, he had about 15 minutes to take the plate to a darkroom where he would fix the image permanently with chemicals. Unlike the earlier daguerreotypes, multiple photographs could be made from one glass plate.

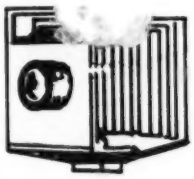
The wet plate process was slow and especially hard for Hale, who had lost an arm in a childhood accident.

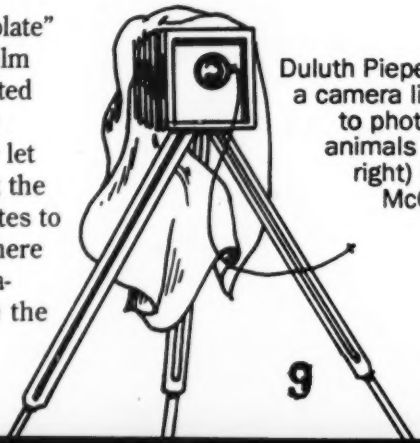
Advancements in photography in the 1870s allowed Hale, and other photographers, to travel further with their cameras, take more photos during each **photo shoot**, and work in all kinds of weather.

D. C. Hale died in 1934. His career as a photographer, and his surviving photographs, spanned more than 50 years.

— Millie K Frese

To take photographs D.C. Hale inserted glass plates into a camera similar to this one.





Duluth Pieper used a camera like this to photograph animals (above right) in rural McGregor.

Duluth Pieper
(1897-1950?)

MCGREGOR — When Duluth Pieper was eight years old, he loved to take pictures of animals, people, and buildings in his rural neighborhood near McGregor, Iowa. Pieper and other amateur photographers in the early 1900s took advantage of developments in photography to learn new skills.

The dry plate process marked the beginning of an era that delivered photography into the hands of children and adults worldwide. Introduced in the 1880s, dry glass plates allowed Pieper to document his life with pictures. Dry plates were an improvement over

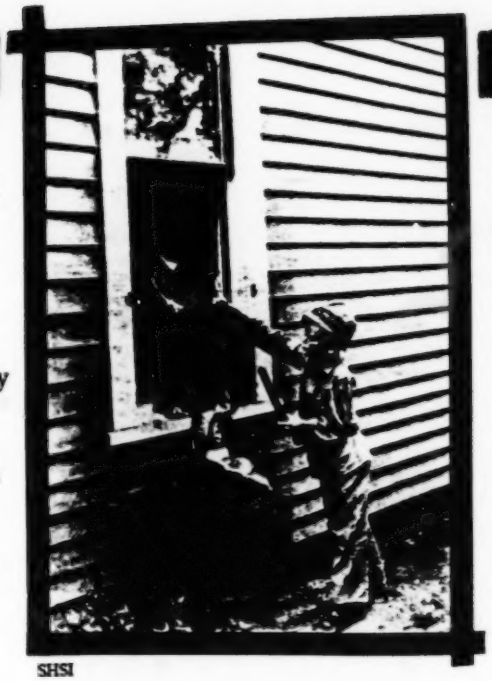
Photo shoot — Photo session away from studio

wet plates that required photographers to lug lots of equipment around and develop pictures as soon as they were taken.

Dry plates didn't need to be developed right away and Duluth could develop other people's pictures days and weeks after they had been taken. He charged four cents for each dry plate he processed and four cents for each print or postcard he made.

While little information about Pieper's life has survived, we can learn a lot from his photographs. His pictures tell us how Iowa looked to a young person in the early 1900s. They also give us an idea of who Pieper's friends were, where his house was, and what his cat looked like. Using these photos as parts of a puzzle, we can piece together a larger picture of the life of Duluth Pieper.

— *Michelle Rubin*



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E.M. Clark
(1884-1963)

RUTHVEN — "Come quick — Miss Clark is taking pictures!" Children who lived in the northwest Iowa town of Ruthven in the early 1900s loved to pose for local photographer Edith Mary (E.M.) Clark. She let them dress up in costumes and took photographs of them play acting. While she set up her equipment, Clark entertained her subjects with music from her **gramophone**.

Clark began working as a professional photographer in 1907 when she was 22 years old. She took regular portraits of customers in her Ruthven home, where she developed the film and printed the pictures in a dark hallway.

Clark had three cameras during her career, two of which used black-and-white roll film similar to the film photographers use today.

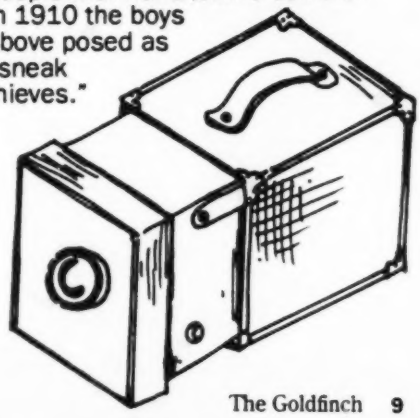
One of her cameras was a hand-held Kodak **Brownie**, which became popular in 1900. This inexpensive invention allowed photographers like Clark to escape from their studios and heavy equipment. With her small Brownie, Clark documented the community where she had been born and raised. She captured many scenes, from picnics and traveling minstrel shows to snapshots of everyday life.

Clark shared her photographs with the neighbors and friends who had posed for many of them. She often reprinted her photos as postcards and sold them in area stores.

Clark ended her short career in 1912 when she married Dale Brott. Photography became a hobby, along with song writing, poetry, and gardening. Though her career was short, it has given future generations a lively look at life in small-town Iowa in the early 1900s.

— *Colleen A. Kemps*

E.M. Clark photographed young people with her Brownie camera. In 1910 the boys above posed as "sneak thieves."



Gramophone — Old-fashioned record player

10 Brownie — Small camera made by Kodak

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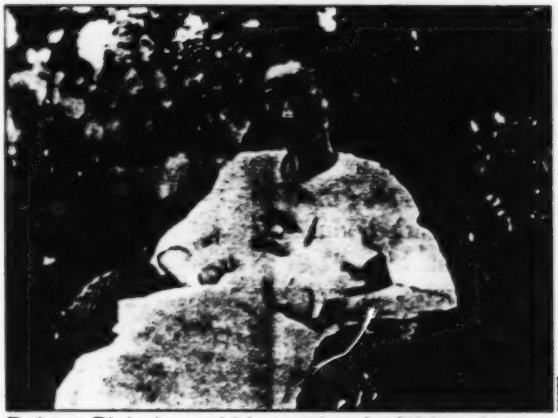
The Brown family poses for this family portrait between 1905 and 1910, in Buxton, Iowa, a town that no longer exists.

Document your world



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Robert Rickels and his mother in Atkins, Iowa, 1923. Why are baby pictures important?

Check out the photos we borrowed from Iowa's gigantic photograph album. Study them closely to discover why Iowans took photographs, how they lived and dressed, what they did for fun, and what was important to them.

Sharing memories

Portraits let families share memories with relatives who live far away. Grandma and Grandpa may not often see their grandchildren in person, but photos keep them up to date.

In the late 1800s, family portraits were **formal** affairs. Cameras were complicated and expensive so many families, like the Brown family pictured to the left, visited photography studios to have their pictures taken.

After the turn of the century more and more people could afford cameras, and family portraits became records of **informal** moments. The world of photography grew larger as photography equipment grew smaller and less expensive.

Preserving traditions

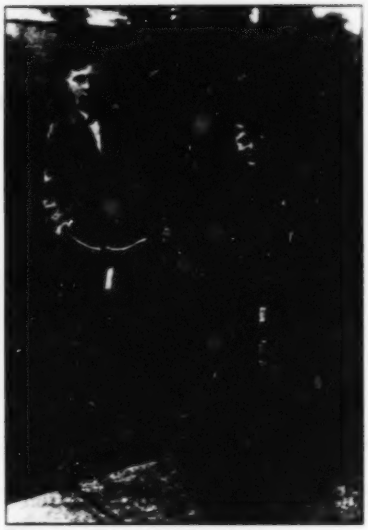
Photos of ethnic groups help Iowans celebrate all cultures in Iowa's history. Photos capture

SHSI

These three Chinese men pose in Cedar Rapids around 1890. What does their clothing tell us about Iowa history?

Formal — Planned and serious

Informal — Relaxed and unplanned



Brothers Lorne and Henry Pelzer pose with bikes around 1929.

These baseball players had their picture taken in Pella, Iowa around 1955. How have baseball uniforms and equipment changed since then?

traditions that have passed through generations and remind Iowans of the customs, dress, and rituals that have been lost.

Celebrations

Photos celebrate special occasions and achievements — a new baby in the family, a birthday party, or a big win at the ballpark. When the baby has grown up, the birthday candles have been blown out, and the big game is over, photographs remind families and friends of special moments they don't want to forget.

Special things

Finally, photos remind people of special things in their lives. You may have photos of your favorite stuff — your first bike or an animal friend who is your closest pal.

Iowa families have photographed their special belongings for more than 100 years. These photos tell stories of the things that have been important to Iowans. You may have photos very similar to the one of the Pelzer brothers pictured above with their bicycles. Your clothes might be different, and your bike might be a little racier, but the idea behind the photos is the same: You want to remember something important to you, just as the Pelzer brothers did 65 years ago.

History today

The photos of your life in Iowa in the 1980s and 1990s are tomorrow's historical clues. A hundred years from now Iowans may look at *your* photographs, just like you are looking at photos of Iowa and Iowans in the past. What would 12-year-olds in the year 2094 think about in-line skates, video games, and action figures? They may giggle at your goofy haircut and clothes, but your photos will teach them why Iowa photographers have documented the world around them.

— Amy Ruth

Your turn

Explore the photos you have at home. How are they different from the photos on these pages? How are they the same?

11 12

PHOTOGRAPHY FUN

Photography in MOTION

WATERLOO — On November 3, 1894, young Perle Schmidt and her Waterloo neighbors experienced something new when they attended a magic lantern show in a local church.

The magic lantern was simply an early slide projector. The audience in Waterloo watched in fascination as the performers set up their equipment and started the show. European scenes sprung up on the wall. Perle and the rest of the community saw castles, Swiss mountains, and a train rushing across a bridge. One performer explained each scene, while the other ran the magic lantern, inserting picture slides one by one. Showing two slides at once or sliding them across the light quickly made "moving" pictures.

Magic lanterns were a popular form of entertainment 100 years ago. The lantern pictured here sold for $6.40 in the 1900 Sears Catalog.

"It is not possible to describe the thrills we experienced," Perle wrote in 1945.

What the audience saw that night was not really magic, but the wonders of photography coming to life. Oil or gas lamps provided the bright light that was needed to project the pictures through a lens and onto a wall or screen.

After the Waterloo show, the performers packed up the magic lantern and left the community. But the show had left its mark. The moving pictures of faraway places brought new ideas to the people of Waterloo. The magic lantern pictures changed the way Perle and her neighbors saw the world.

"Everyone around became potential artists," Perle remembered years later. "Inspiration did come to Iowa's youth. It really was the magic lantern lighting the way."

— Amy Ruth

A small greeting makes a big hit

IOWA — The first U.S. postcards were plain, penny cards sold by the government in 1873. Advertisers often bought these small cards to carry messages about their products.

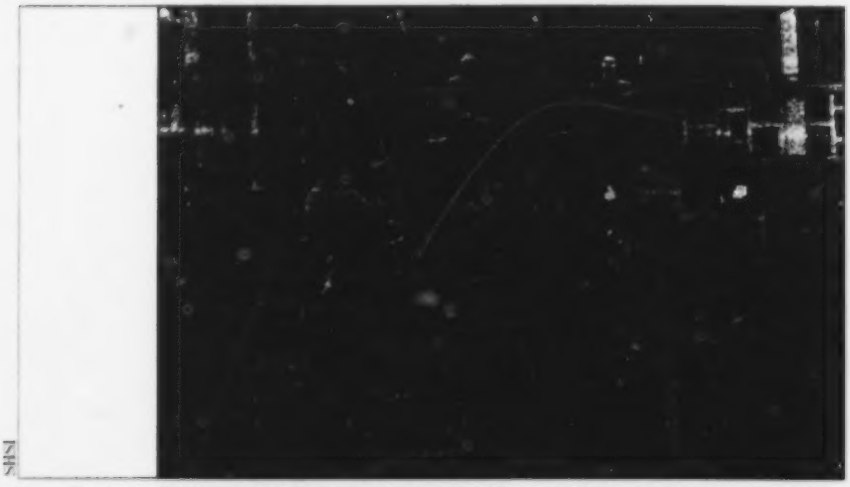
Some people wanted to make their own cards. Instead of carrying only a message, the cards also featured drawings. At first decorated cards were unpopular because they cost two pennies to mail, twice as much as those sold by the government.

Congress passed a law in 1898 that said all cards could be mailed for one penny. Iowans and others across the United States began making and collecting postcards.

Between 1898 and 1917, millions of cards were bought, mailed, collected, and saved. This time in postcard history is often called the "picture-postcard craze." Iowa picture postcards, often made by local photographers, featured town libraries, churches, schools, and main streets. Many captured country scenes and rural life. Some Iowa families turned their photos into postcards and mailed pictures of their lives to distant relatives.

Popular card themes also included holiday greetings, fancy alphabet letters, and funny cartoons. Some postcards were decorated with feathers, glitter, or leather. Others featured people from different states or cultures. There was a card for every collector.

By 1919, people were buying and sending colorful greeting cards instead of postcards. Many collectors saved their postcards, and people still enjoy collecting and looking at them. Today, these picture postcards tell the stories of Iowans who preserved their memories with photographs.



The Platner family had this photograph, taken in Mount Vernon around 1905, made into postcards.

— *Sherri D[illegible]*

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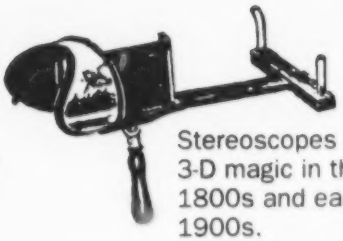
The whole world in your hands



Stereoscopes made 3-D magic in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

IOWA CITY — Without leaving home, and without a remote control or VCR, 8-year-old Matt Taylor has traveled to the mountains of Tennessee and experienced the wonders of Disney World.

How did he do it? Simple. He's got a View-Master, a small viewing device that shows three-dimensional pictures. When he looks at **reels** of pictures, two very similar copies of each picture on the reel combine to show one 3-D picture.

"They're always fun," Matt told *The Goldfinch*. "Every time you look at the pictures it feels like you're there."

Invented in 1938, that's just what the View-Master was supposed to do — give people the feeling of being part of a landscape or an adventure without really being there. In the 1950s, View-Master reels showed scenes from every U.S. state. View-Master travelers from California to Connecticut have visited Iowa's farms, businesses, and historic sites without hopping on a train, plane, bus, or car.. Today, View-Master also makes 3-D magic with scenes from television shows and movies.

Years before the View-Master, Iowans entertained themselves with a similar invention called a stereoscope. This hand-held viewing device made 3-D images from stereograph cards. Photographs were glued side by side on these rectangular cardboard cards.

Stereoscopes were most popular between 1860 and 1910 when photographers used special two-lens cameras to take millions of pictures, including many of Iowa. Writing on the back of each card explained the pictures.

Stereoscopes were used in schools to teach geography and history and at home for entertainment. Instead of taking in the sights and sounds of radio or television, Iowans took in the sights of parks, landscapes, and exotic places. A family vacation in the late 1800s might have meant a stereoscopic trip to the Grand Canyon or the Egyptian pyramids.

Today, stereograph viewers and cards are rare, but not forgotten. Parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles may still have them tucked away, waiting for someone to dust them off and peek at the past.

— Amy Ruth

Reels — Cardboard circles that store View-Master pictures

Matt Taylor's View-Master puts the world at his fingertips. Photos by Jim Meisner

PHOTOPUZZLER

The following words all start with the word **PHOTO.** Figure 'em out using the clues provided. Remember, the word photo means "picture" and "light." P.S. Use a dictionary if you need to . . . we did!

Answers on page 30.

1. What film turns into PHOTO _ _ _ _ _ _ _
2. More than one photo PHOTO _
3. A machine that makes copies PHOTO _ _ _ _ _ _ _
4. A horse race that's too close to call PHOTO _ _ _ _ _ _ _
5. A tiny living being that needs light to live PHOTO _ _ _ _
6. Someone who takes pictures PHOTO _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
7. A reporter who takes pictures PHOTO _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
8. A fear of light PHOTO _ _ _ _ _ _ _
9. Someone who "reads" photographs PHOTO _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
10. Where film is developed PHOTO _ _ _ _

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

POSTCARD POWER!

Start shutterbugging! Document the world around you, then make picture postcards to share with friends and family. Photograph people you know, interesting parts of your community, or any of the 26 postcard possibilities on the next page. As an artist, you'll create something pleasing to the eye. As a documentary photographer, you'll record important information about life in Iowa in the 1990s. For this activity you'll need: construction paper, photographs 3-and-a-half inches tall by 5 inches wide, glue, scissors, 19¢ stamps, and your imagination!

❶ Use photographs you have at home, or take new ones. When possible, don't use the original photographs. Instead, have a photo shop print another photo from the negative, or make a color Xerox copy of the original photograph.

❷ Glue and tape will destroy photographs eventually. Ask for two sets of prints when you develop your film. Make one set into postcards, and save the other set.

❸ Choose focused shots that show your subjects clearly. The front of your postcard may look like this mini model:

Be creative with photos that are smaller than the postcard. If you can't use photographs to make postcards, draw pictures instead!

Place 19¢ Stamp Here

Postcard Tip #1

Store your postcards in sleeves made from high-quality linen or cotton paper. Ask for this paper at an office supply store. To make a sleeve, fold one piece of paper in half.

Place 19¢ Stamp Here

Postcard Tip #2

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Photo information:

Place 19¢ Stamp Here

Message

Address

Photo by:

Photocopy before cutting!

❶ Cut construction paper rectangles, 3-and-a-half-inches tall by 5-inches wide. You'll need one for each photo. Glue each photo to the construction paper rectangles.

❺ Photocopy the pattern above. Make one for each postcard. Cut along the edges. Glue it to construction paper rectangles. Flatten your postcards between books.

❻ In the blank spaces, write the photographer's name, the date the photo was taken, and a photo description. Now your postcards are ready for messages and 19¢ stamps.

Postcard Possibilities

- Barns
- Doors
- Family
- Homes
- Jokes
- Labor
- News
- Pals
- Roads
- Transportation
- Vegetables
- Xerox Machines
- Zoos

When you're on vacation, send a postcard to yourself. It will be waiting for you when you get home!

Place 19¢ Stamp Here

Postcard Tip #3

Decorate your postcards with stickers, glitter, and magic markers.

Place 19¢ Stamp Here

Postcard Tip #4

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history makers

A DAY IN IOWA

by Millie K. Frese

Erin McGrew of Independence and Michael Yeager of Ottumwa spent Saturday, August 27, 1994 documenting their family, friends, and communities. *The Goldfinch* gave these budding photographers disposable cameras and asked them to photograph a day in their lives.

Erin McGrew

Mike Yeager

Erin and Mike approached the assignment differently. Mike took almost all of the pictures himself, while Erin asked her family members to snap a few shots.

For Erin, the challenge of setting up different poses was the best part of the assignment. "People are easier to photograph than pets," she said. "Pets don't cooperate." In addition to family pets, the sixth-grader enjoys reading, swimming, and biking.

Michael's day with a camera hooked him on photography. "I'd like to be an artist or photographer when I grow up," he said. In the meantime, the fifth-grader plays the cello, draws, and writes stories and poems.

Now, through their photographs, Erin and Mike tell their own stories.

10:58 a.m. Mike makes his bed. Photo by mom, Deb Yeager.

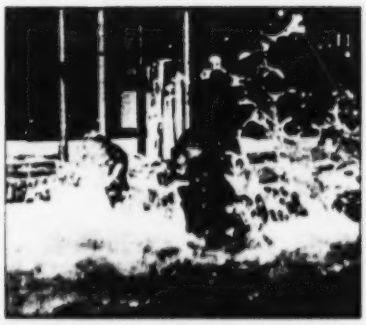
11:05 a.m. Brian (Mike's dog), enjoys a sunny day inside. Photo by Mike Yeager.

1:20 p.m. Mike's brother, Ben, kicks a ball in the front yard. Photo by Mike Yeager.

2:02 p.m. Mike's mom shops for coffee at the grocery store. Photo by Mike Yeager.

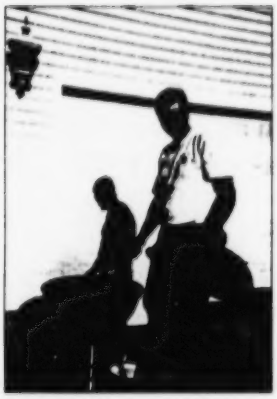
Evening. Mike's friends dress up as army guys. Photo by Mike Yeager.

US 19

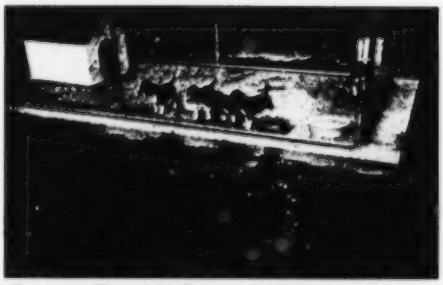


2 p.m. Erin and her brother, Alex, enjoy going to the pool. Alex enjoys splashing in the water. Photo by Erin McGrew.

5:30 p.m. Erin relaxes with a book after a full day of fun. Photo by dad, Steve McGrew.



6 p.m. Erin's dad cooks supper on the grill. Photo by Erin McGrew.



7 p.m. The McGrews' eight-week-old puppies are waiting to be fed. Photo by mom, Nancy McGrew.

8:25 p.m. Before they go to bed, Erin and Alex shower and brush their teeth. Photo by Steve McGrew.

8:30 p.m. Erin says "goodnight!" Photo by Nancy McGrew.

Your turn

1. Name three things you've learned about Erin and Mike.
2. Erin and Mike photographed similar subjects. Name three of them.
3. If you made your own photo essay, what shots would you include?
4. What might Iowans in the year 2094 learn from Mike and Erin's photo essays?

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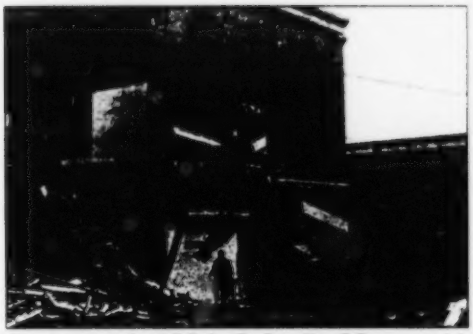
Helping History



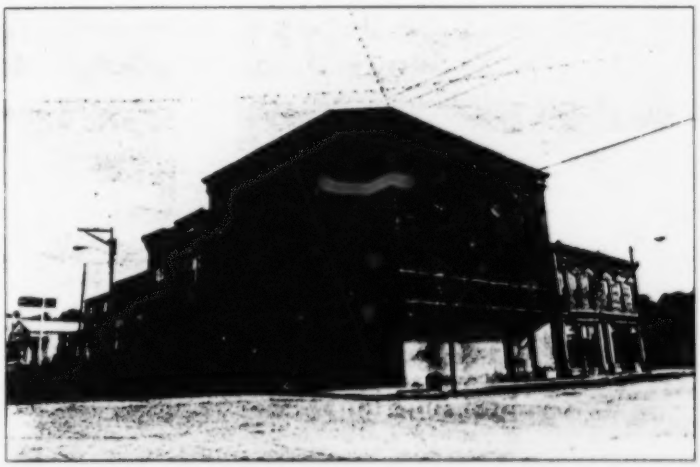
On June 14, 1994, Oxford's 99-year-old opera house was torn down.

When 10-year-old Ashley Pitkin walks down Augusta Avenue in her hometown of Oxford, she knows something is missing. Last June, Oxford's 99-year-old opera house was torn down to make room for a new bank building.

"It feels like a piece of Oxford came down with it," Ashley recently told *The Goldfinch*.

In its time, the opera house was used for live entertainment and housed several businesses.

Although the opera house is gone, it isn't lost. At least not completely. During Oxford's 126-year history, residents have taken photographs to document their town. These photographs help the community remember the opera house and other old buildings.



This photograph of Oxford's opera house, taken a year before it was torn down, helps residents remember the history in their community. Photos by Linda Schreiber, Oxford

Some of the photographers' names have not survived through the years. Today, their pictures tell their stories. Other photographers are more recent. Oxford resident and **documentary photographer** Linda Schreiber has spent the last two years documenting her hometown. She photographs major buildings and streets and attends community events to catch history as it happens.

Like other Oxford photographers before her, Schreiber has made her photographs into postcards to share with her community. Although the pictures show Oxford in the 1990s, they have a special place in history.

"One thing we learn in documentary photography is to look at how photographs show change over time," Schreiber told *The Goldfinch*. When Oxford residents compare old and new photos, they may see how much or how little their town has changed over time.

Schreiber hopes her photographs will help other Oxford residents remember the history in their town. "I'm hoping to preserve some of the information and knowledge so it's available for the next person," she said.

This includes future generations of young people like Ashley who want to remember Oxford even when it's changing in front of their eyes.

"It's good to learn from photographs if buildings are torn down," said Ashley. "Photographs help us learn a lot."

— Amy Ruth

Documentary photographer — Someone who makes visual records with photography

An Oxford Album

Photo courtesy Iowa Hunn, Oxford

Augusta Avenue, Oxford, Iowa, around 1910

Photo by Linda Schreiber, Oxford

Augusta Avenue, Oxford, Iowa, 1993

What do these photographs reveal about Oxford? Plenty! The two views of Augusta Avenue were taken approximately 80 years apart. Let's take a look.

The details

At a glance, the two photos of Augusta Avenue look similar. Study the details to find differences. The older photograph shows a dirt road, hitching posts for horses, old cars, and awnings over shop windows. The 1993 photograph shows a paved road, parked cars, street lights, and TV antennas.

The buildings

Study the buildings on the left side of the street. Look carefully at the windows. They'll show you the same three buildings on the first block appear in both photos.

Find clues about life inside the buildings. The striped pole points to a barber shop in the second building. There are now apartments in this building.

When you cross the street, notice three buildings are missing from the 1993 picture. Two of these buildings burned down in 1992, and the space is now a car lot. Look for the old opera house on the right side of the street. You can see it in both photos.

The scoop

These two photographs give us the scoop on Oxford by showing us changes in the town between the early 1900s and 1993. Here's what we've learned:

1. Augusta Avenue was paved sometime after 1910.
2. Curb-side parking replaced hitching posts.
3. Electrical wires changed the skyline.
4. Awnings aren't as common today as they were 80 years ago.

Your turn

Get out your magnifying glass and make a list of more differences between the photographs. Turn to page 30 for the answers.

by Sherri Dagel

Be a photo historian

Since the mid 1800s, trained and untrained photographers have taken thousands of pictures of Iowa's people, landscapes, farms, and cities. Today, these historic photos of Iowa life survive in libraries, in grandparents' dark closets and dusty attics, and in family albums.

On the backs of some old photos you will find written information about the **subjects**. Photographers often write names, dates, and descriptions on the backs of their photos. Unfortunately, some historical photographs offer little written information. Photo historians must uncover clues by carefully studying photos and asking questions about what they see.

Clue ● The photo

Imagine you find the above photograph of the Vigars family from rural Moville in western Iowa and want to learn more about them. Begin by making a list of everything you see in the photo so you don't miss important details. Start at the top of the photo and look from left to right until you have listed every item.

Clue ● The people

Look at the people in the photo. In this picture, four men, three women, and two children face the camera. The men are wearing good clothes that would not be worn for chores. Perhaps a relative is visiting or it is a special occasion.

Subjects: People and Buildings in photo

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Clue ❺ The clothes

Clothes often help date photographs. In this picture, the men's jackets are buttoned up. This was common in the early 1900s. Old mail-order catalogs and magazines will help you determine when clothing styles were popular.

Clue ❻ The action

The Vigars family is starting or finishing a meal. One woman holds a tray of cups. A full apron protects her dress from spills. Plates, a glass pitcher, serving bowls, and glasses are on the table.

Clue ❼ The room

Photographers might accidentally photograph objects they didn't mean to include in a shot. These objects often give helpful clues about when the picture was taken and what the family enjoyed and valued.

In this photograph, a heater stands to the left of the table. Because a heater isn't needed in a kitchen that's often warmed by a stove, the family is probably in a room other than the kitchen. We may guess that because the table is so close to the heater, the picture was probably taken during a warm month when the heater was not lit.

A framed certificate and a calendar hang on the back wall for family and guests to see. Families displayed items they were proud of in the parlor, a room reserved for entertaining guests, or in the dining room.

Clue ❽ The photographer

The photographer is seated on the far right, holding a cable attached to the camera that allowed him to snap the family picture and pose at the same time. Everyone is carefully arranged so their faces can be seen clearly.

Putting it together

After studying photographs, photo historians write summaries. A summary for the Vigars family photo may read something like this: The Vigars family picture was probably taken between 1900 and 1915 by one of the men at the table. The Vigars are gathered together at a meal, perhaps for a special occasion. The picture probably was taken during late spring or summer in the dining room or parlor.

TAKING CARE OF PHOTOS

Old photographs are a good way to learn about and remember family history. To help all your pictures last as long as possible, follow these steps for handling, labeling, and storing photographs:

❶ Wash your hands and wear cotton gloves when handling pictures. Natural skin oils and dirt damage photographs.

❷ When labeling photographs, use a pencil and write lightly near the edge of the photo's back side. Pressing hard on the photo will damage it. Never use a pen. Ink might leak through the photo and damage the image.

❸ Record the following information on the back side of photographs: subjects, photographer, and where and when the photo was taken. If you do not know the exact date, write an approximate time like "Summer 1990" or "The 1980s."

❹ Print clearly so others can read your writing in the future.

❺ Never tape or glue your photos in an album. Both damage pictures.

❻ Store your photos in a cool, dry place. Keep photographs out of the sun so they do not fade.

❼ Use special frames and albums that are free of photo damaging chemicals to store or display all photographs. Ask a local photographer or camera shop about special supplies.

— Sherri Dagel

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YOUR TURN

Many pictures will tell stories if you look closely. Ask a relative to help you explore old photos of your family, your home, or your community. Together you will learn about Iowa's past and your family history.

In the meantime, practice your skills with the McFarland family photograph above. Answer the questions below and then turn to page 30 for answers.

The McFarlands lived in the early 1900s near Clinton in eastern Iowa. Make a detailed list of everything in the picture and then use the following questions to "read" the photograph.

❶ How might the subjects be related?

❷ What is the family doing?

❸ Where is the family?

❹ Are the subjects wearing work clothes or dress clothes?

❺ What clues in this photo tell you it's an informal snapshot?

❻ This picture was made into postcards. Who do you think received the cards?

— Sherri Dagel

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Not pictured: Who missed the shot?

Imagine looking through a family photo album. You flip through pictures of parents, grandparents, and brothers or sisters. Other photos remind you of your home and your first pet goldfish. But maybe something is missing. What if there are no photos of you?

Without these personal pictures, you could not tell how you changed over time. Birthday parties, vacations, and time spent goofing off with friends would be difficult to remember without pictures to remind you. And without these pictures, people looking at the album in the future would have a hard time getting to know you.

Iowa's missing snapshots

If you looked through an album with all the photographs taken in Iowa, you would notice that some people and activities are missing.

Most old portraits we find today are of Iowans who could afford to pay a photographer or buy a camera. There are few pictures of people who could not afford the luxury of a portrait or camera.

Many families photographed their homes, cars, and new household appliances like washing machines and dishwashers. Poorer families, who had few of these special things, often did not want pictures taken that showed bare houses and old clothes.

At one time, few photos were taken of people fighting, gambling, or dancing. Photos of pregnant women, sick people, and people with disabilities were also uncommon.

Some people believed photos invaded their privacy. Photographers might have taken posed family pictures at reunions or holiday gatherings. But they probably put away their cameras without taking **candid** shots of uncles playing cards, cousins running around the yard, and grandparents snoozing on the front porch.

Some people do not allow photos to be taken for religious reasons. Some religious groups believe it is sinful to create images of people and don't allow photos in their homes.

Pieces of Iowa's history are missing for many reasons. Without photos, it is difficult to learn how some Iowans lived.

— Sherri Dagel

Your turn

When you take pictures, record personal activities and events that will tell others all about your life in Iowa in the 1990s. You and your camera can begin capturing Iowa's history today.

JEREMIAH'S GIFT

BY AMY RUTH

On a chilly November morning in 1872, Jeremiah Miller stood on the front steps of his father's general store in Mount Pleasant, Iowa and loosened his necktie. He sat down on a step, only to stand up again instantly, remembering his mother's warning: "If you go outside, don't get your good clothes dirty! You want to look your best for the photograph."

The Millers were having their first family portrait taken and Mama and Papa were busy getting Jeremiah's brother and sisters ready.

Jeremiah squirmed in his jacket as a gentleman in a tall silk hat walked out of the store. As the man walked down the steps, something fell from his pocket and rolled into the street. Jeremiah ran down the stairs and grabbed it. It was a quarter! He looked around and spotted the gentleman half a block away.

"Sir! Sir!" he yelled, running after him. The man turned.

Jeremiah held up the coin. "You dropped this, sir, when you came out of my papa's store."

The man's eyes narrowed. "Joshua Miller is lucky to have such an honest son."

"Thank you, sir," Jeremiah said.

The man smiled. "You keep the quarter, for being so honest."

Jeremiah's eyes bulged and his mouth dropped open. "Th-th-thank you," he stammered.

Art by Mary Moye-Rowley

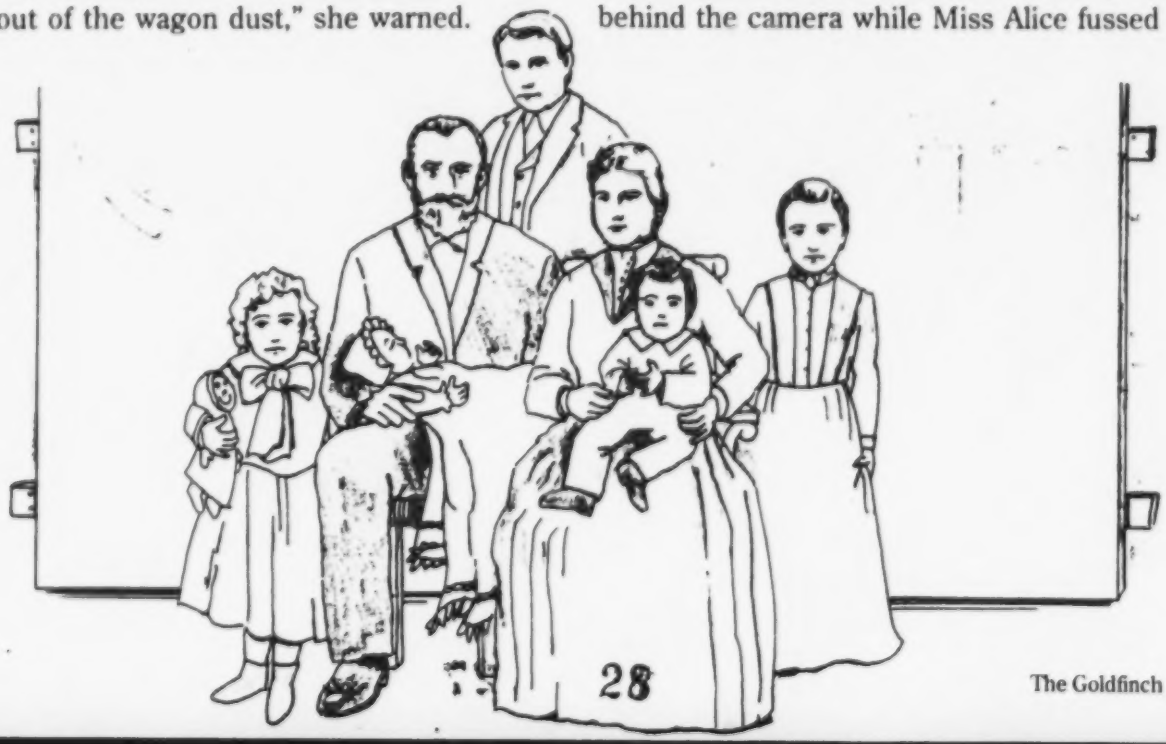
As the man strolled away, Jeremiah wrapped the coin in his handkerchief and shoved it deep into his pocket. He was a twelve-year-old with a fortune, and he knew just what to do with it. He had long admired a pocket watch in the jeweler's window and had been saving his pennies for almost two years. A few more chores, and the watch would be his!

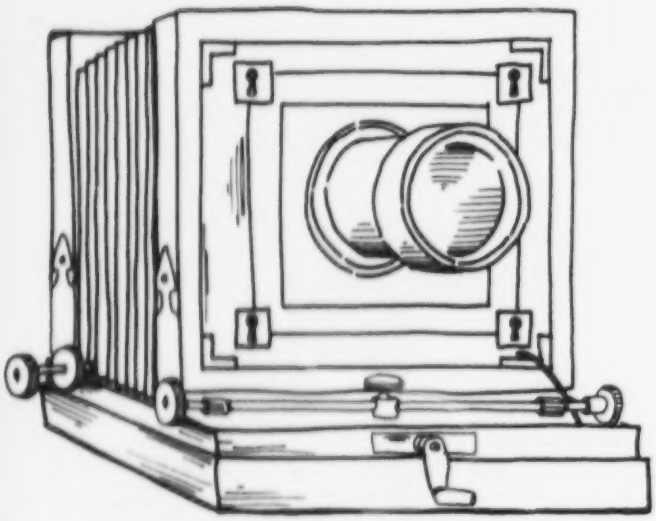
He ran back to the store where his family was waiting impatiently. Everyone was dressed up for the family portrait. "We'd best be on our way," Papa said. Mama shifted baby Mollie to her left arm and beckoned for Lucinda, Samuel, and Emma to follow her. "Stay out of the wagon dust," she warned.

The family walked across the street and into the Jacobson Portrait Studio. Miss Alice, and her sister, Miss Dora, greeted them as they came in.

The studio had already been prepared for the portrait. A velvet curtain hung on a far wall. Off to the side were many studio props: potted plants, tables, chairs, and pillars. A skylight, stretching from the roof down the south wall, would let in enough light for the Miller family portrait.

Miss Dora disappeared under the drape behind the camera while Miss Alice fussed





over the family. She directed Mama and Papa to two fancy chairs in front of the curtain. Each chair had one arm, and they were pushed together. Papa held the sleeping Mollie, and Mama settled two-year-old Samuel in her lap.

Miss Alice then positioned the other children. Ten-year-old Lucinda stood next to Mama and leaned against the folds of her full dress. Five-year-old Emma stood next to Papa, hugging her rag doll. Jeremiah stood behind his parents, resting his hands on the chair backs to steady himself.

"Is everybody ready?" asked Miss Dora from behind the camera. Papa nodded.

"It's very important that you all stay very still," Miss Dora warned. If anybody has to move, do it now." Papa coughed and Emma scratched her nose. They were ready.

"When I raise my hand, you must stay perfectly still until I lower it," Miss Dora said. "It will take about a minute to get the picture."

She slid a large glass plate holder into the camera, removed the cap from the lens, and raised her hand. Fifteen seconds ticked by, but Samuel couldn't wait any longer. "I wanna go home," he said, squirming in Mama's lap.

Everyone laughed, except Miss Dora. "Let's try it again," she said.

Everything went smoothly the second time and Miss Dora hurried away to develop the plate.

While Papa and Miss Alice chose the cardboard to mount the photographs on, Lucinda took Samuel and Emma home. Jeremiah watched his mother admire the baby pictures on the wall. "How much is the least expensive **christening portrait**?" she asked Miss Alice.

Jeremiah put his hand in his pocket. He wanted so much for Mama to have a picture of Mollie in the family christening gown. He held his breath. Maybe Papa could afford it.

"For that adorable baby, I'll give you a **carte de visite** with four poses for 50 cents," Miss Alice said. "The portraits are small, but you'll have plenty to send to relatives."

Mama thanked her and turned back to the wall. Jeremiah knew 50 cents was too much.

Carte de visite — inexpensive photo popular in the mid-1800s

Christening portrait — Special baby picture

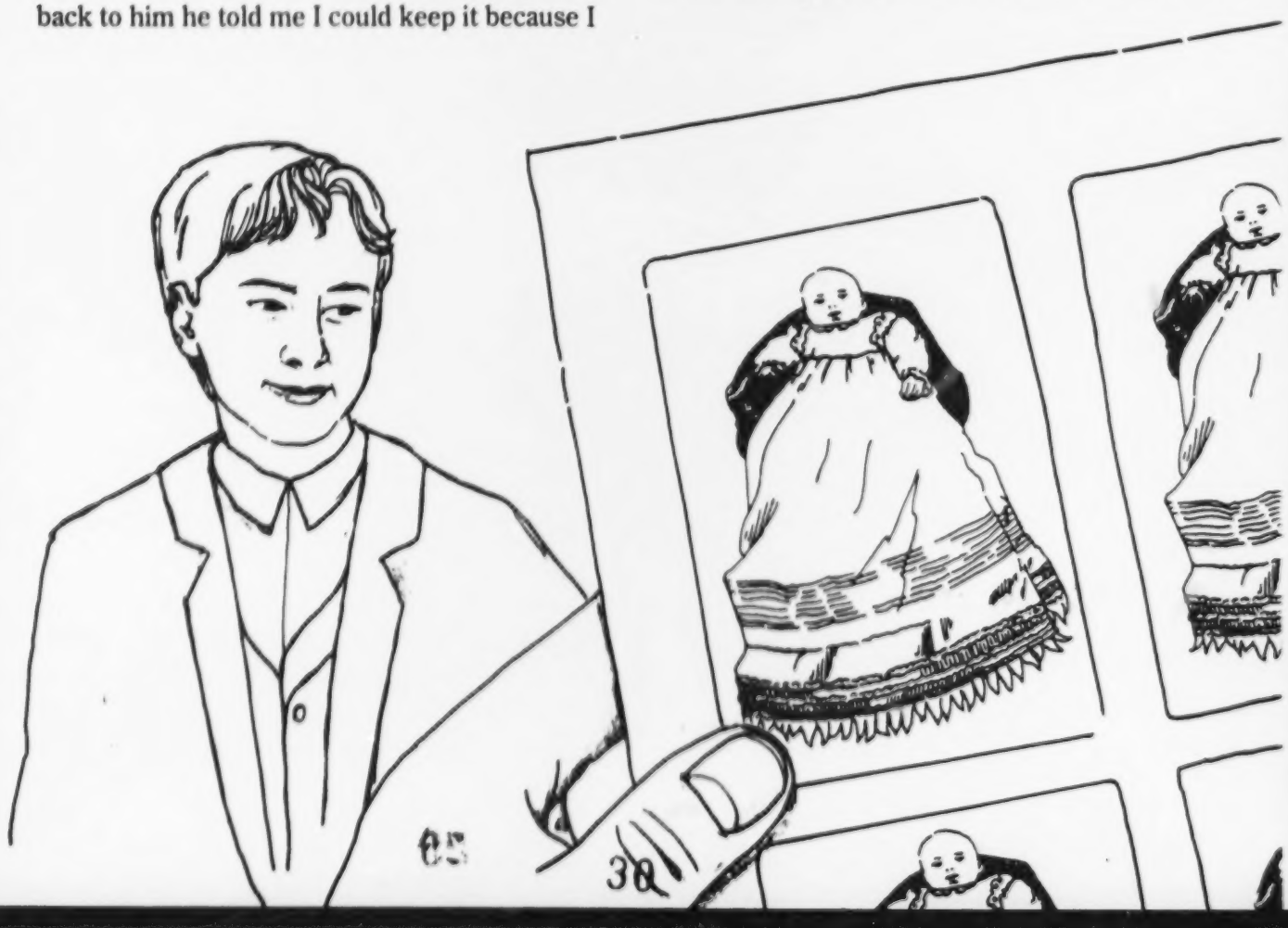
Papa handed Miss Alice three silver dollars for the family portrait. "Are you ready, Josephine?" he asked Mama. She nodded and walked slowly to the door.

"Wait!" cried Jeremiah, as he pulled a handful of coins from his pocket. "A gentleman leaving the store this morning dropped this." He held the quarter up to his parents. Mama gasped. "When I tried to give it back to him he told me I could keep it because I was so honest. The rest I've been saving from my chores at the blacksmith's shop." Jeremiah handed the coins to his mother. "I want Mama to have the money for Mollie's portrait."

"You're sure?" asked Papa, smiling with pride.

Jeremiah nodded. "Yes sir."

As Mama walked back into the studio, beaming with happiness, Jeremiah knew he had made the right decision. The watch could wait.



Answers

Page 15 (PhotoPuzzler):

1 Photograph **2** Photos **3** Photocopier
4 Photo Finish **5** Photocell **6** Photographer
7 Photojournalist **8** Photo phobia **9** Photo Interpretor
10 Photolab

Page 21 (Helping History):

1 The sidewalks in the older photo are higher to keep the mud from the street out of the buildings. **2** The older photo features painted advertisements on buildings. By 1993, these advertisements have been painted over. **3** There are more people in the older photo than in the 1993 photo. **4** There is one American flag in the older photo, but none in the 1993 photo.

Page 24 (Be a Photo Historian):

The McFarland family photo was probably taken in the early 1900s by a relative and amateur photographer who was sitting or standing near the table. Family members reach for food or munch on crackers or cookies. The two women on the right are wearing aprons, which might mean they prepared the meal.

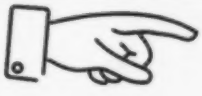
A stove and warm bowls of food on the stove tell us the family eats in the kitchen.

Most faces are turned away from the camera or hidden from view, and the man on the left only got his hand in the shot! This is a candid photo. If this was a formal shot, all subjects would have been carefully arranged in front of the camera.

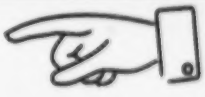
Back Cover (History Mystery):

To take pictures he posed in, Kent used a camera with a timer. This gave him enough time to set up the shot and get into his pose before the timer went off and the picture was taken.

Differences in both photos: **1** Position of Fred Kent's arms. **2** The cameras Fred Kent is holding. **3** The amount of snow around the cars. **4** Clara's pose.



Show what you know!



In 1846, years before your grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents were born, Iowa became a state.

In 1996, Iowa will celebrate its 150th birthday. Join the party by imagining what life was like in 1846: What did Native Americans living in the Iowa Territory think about statehood? What did statehood mean to children? Can you imagine a day in the life of an 11-year-old in 1846?

Share your ideas with *The Goldfinch*. Send stories, drawings, poems, photographs, and other creative work to:

Amy Ruth, editor
The Goldfinch
State Historical Society of Iowa
402 Iowa Ave.
Iowa City, IA 52240

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The Roost

IE 32

HISTORY MYSTERY

Iowa photographer Fred Kent posed for these pictures in 1964 with his wife, Clara, and their Volkswagen Bug. Would you be surprised to learn that Fred also took the photographs? How'd he do it? While you're figuring it out, see if you can spot at least four differences in the two photos. All answers on page 30.

Photos courtesy Barbara Kent Buckley

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